

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) Natural cheese which comprises a lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori*, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is present at a viable count of 10⁷ cfu/g or more when preserved at a temperature of 10°C or less for 6 months.

2. (Original) The natural cheese according to claim 1, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is resistant to low pH environment.

3. (Original) The natural cheese according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is *Lactobacillus gasseri* OLL 2716 (FERM BP-6999) or a mutant thereof.

Claim 4 (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A food which comprises the natural cheese according to any one of claims 1 to-43.

6. (Currently amended) A process for producing the natural cheese according to any one of claims 1 to-43, which comprises:

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111

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adding an yeast extract to a milk component before formation of a curd, and/or incubating the curd after molding and pressing.

7. (Original) The process according to claim 6, wherein the curd is incubated without being cooled after molding and pressing.

8. (Original) The process according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the curd is incubated at 20 to 35°C for 16 to 26 hours.

9. (Original) The process according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein a lactic acid bacterium belonging to *Lactobacillus gasseri* having a disinfection potency against *Helicobacter pylori* is added to raw milk as a starter.

10. (Original) The process according to any one of claims 6 to 9, wherein the lactic acid bacterium is *Lactobacillus gasseri* OLL 2716 (FERM BP-6999) or a mutant thereof.